

GOLDEN GRIZZLIES COMMUNITY LETTER

Tuesday, September 30, 2025

Dear Golden Grizzlies,

As we begin a new academic year, I would like to introduce the new Golden Grizzlies Community Letter. I have heard from community members a desire for more communication from leadership. This periodic letter is my pledge to you to share more university updates, from our strategic priorities and initiatives to the accomplishments of our amazing faculty, staff, students and alums. My hope is that it provides us with a shared context as we work together to strengthen our university. My other vehicle for communication, President's Perspective, will be reserved for statements.

Honoring Glenn McIntosh

I must begin this letter by recognizing the passing of one of OU's most passionate and inspirational leaders, Senior Vice President and Chief Diversity Officer Glenn McIntosh. Generations of Golden Grizzlies knew him as the heart and soul of our campus life — a beloved leader who touched the lives of countless students and colleagues as an extraordinary mentor, role model and champion of student success. We will all deeply miss our dear friend and colleague, Glenn, whom we honored at a beautiful memorial service on Sunday. But we will carry on his legacy by continuing to foster belonging and living each day as he did with passion, purpose and perseverance.

Enrollment Growth

Glenn was excited as I was to welcome our nearly 16,000 students to campus this fall, including our largest incoming first-year class since 2019 with 2,330 new first-time-in-any-college students. We also celebrated a milestone for the Honors College, which welcomed nearly 700 new students — its largest incoming cohort ever. All this growth reflects the dedication of our faculty, staff and community partners, who work tirelessly to help every student thrive.

Our first month together has been filled with so much Golden Grizzly pride and excellence, from white coat ceremonies and the “clap in” for new students — to Grizz Fest and new faculty orientation (please see my [Instagram](#) and [LinkedIn](#) accounts). While universities across the nation face challenges, as I note below, we are off to a great start this year — and I am as proud as ever to be your president.

New Leadership





Many talented Golden Grizzlies have contributed to our strong start, including executive vice president for academic affairs and provost Amy Thompson. Some say it is hard to keep up with me. Well, I can't keep up



with Amy. She has been amazing, with her collaborative, can-do approach, and I look forward to seeing everything she and her team accomplish to advance the success of our students.



We will also soon benefit from the arrival of our inaugural chief marketing and inaugural chief marketing and communications officer communications officer, Chris Foley Pilsner. Coming to us from the University of Massachusetts Amherst, Chris brings with her a wealth of experience leading integrated brand, marketing and communication strategies. I am confident that she will help us elevate awareness of the power of an Oakland University education.

Finally, we welcomed Dave Dulio as our interim chief community engagement officer. Many Golden Grizzlies already know Professor Dulio as the Director of the Center for Civic Engagement. Dave will help us advance along the Stewards of Place pathway of Strategic Vision 2030, with a focus on strengthening our commitment to solving real-world problems in the communities we serve.



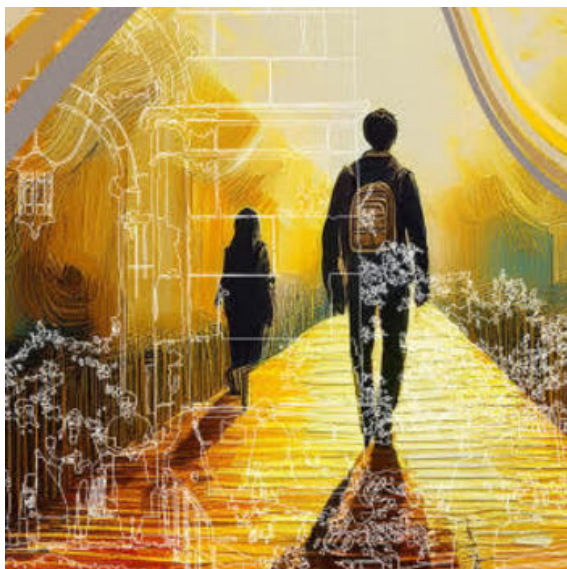
Economic Powerhouse

I am proud that OU is already a powerful force in metro Detroit, driving jobs, investment and innovation. As we shared in our 2024 economic impact report, we powered close to \$2 billion in economic activity across Michigan — nearly 27 times what OU receives in state appropriations. We also supported nearly 6,500 jobs and invested \$326 million in operations, facilities and local construction. And we continue to serve as a leading “brain gain” public university, with more than 95 percent of our employed graduates working in the state of Michigan.

Strategic Vision 2030

We are making significant strides along all five of our strategic pathways, including Our People, Student Success, Discovery, Stewards of Place and Sustainable University. Just consider a few of our forward steps:

- We introduced the OU Pledge to provide undergraduate students with meaningful, hands-on learning opportunities to help launch their bright careers.
- We launched this month the OU Community Changemaker Challenge — new grants designed to support bold projects that engage students and help solve real-world problems in our communities.
- We completed a faculty-and-staff survey, “OU & You,” a key part of the Learning & Growth initiative — and will share the results this fall.



- And we earned national recognition for advancing first-gen and transfer student success from the FirstGen Forward Network and Phi Theta Kappa, respectively.

To learn more about our progress, I invite you to watch this year's State of the University Address, which will be a video released on Oct. 22. I also recommend visiting our Strategic Vision website to get a sense of what lies ahead this academic year. As we approach mental health awareness month in October, I especially encourage you to visit our Healthy Campus initiative page, which is a one-stop shop for resources, programs, groups and services.

Faculty and Staff Excellence

Our university's upward trajectory reflects the excellence of our community, and I am so proud of how Golden Grizzlies are helping to build a better world. Professors Maria Beam

and Lisa Hawley, for example, were awarded a \$2.2 million federal grant to help prepare future social workers and counselors to work in underserved communities. And Distinguished Professor Huirong Fu spearheaded OU's designation as a National Center of Academic Excellence in Cyber Research by the National Security Agency.

I am also so impressed with how OU scholars are turning insights into impact. Distinguished Professor Barbara Oakley wrote about the importance of free speech to individual citizens through the lens of neuroscience in the Wall Street Journal. And Professor Taras Oleksyk was interviewed about a genomics research program in Ukraine in leading publication Science.

And as always, I was inspired by this year's employee Exemplary Awards winners and how they have kept our campus beautiful, our operations efficient, our learning environment welcoming and so much more. I encourage you to nominate outstanding colleagues for next year's awards when nominations open early in the new year.



Federal Actions

While we are experiencing significant momentum, we are navigating challenges from the federal government, too. Let me be clear about our response: while we will always comply with the law, we will always stay true to our values. That includes safeguarding academic freedom, extending opportunity and fostering a safe and inclusive environment that welcomes diversity in its myriad forms. I am grateful to our Strategic Response Team for their diligent efforts in tracking and assessing the impact of federal and state directives on our community.

In Closing

I will close in the spirit of my dear friend Glenn, who reminds us through his life's work that we all belong at OU. Let us honor Glenn by continuing to support one another with the care and compassion that defined his leadership — and by carrying forward his passion, purpose and perseverance to make a lasting impact on the world.

Sincerely,

Ora Hirsch Pescovitz, M.D.
President
Oakland University